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tory off Gravelines, owing to the urgent necessity of revictualing and of replenishing the supplies of ammunition. He states that it is idle to hope for any decisive advantage in naval engagements without a decided superiority of ships: this is much the same as Nelson's "numbers only can annihilate." His experience convinced him that ships might properly dare to run past forts, if only the run were made at speed. He explains how a reasonably effective system may be devised for scouting, intercepting, gaining and keeping touch on the high seas, and steadily insists upon its great importance. Finally, he recognizes that wisdom, experience, and seamanlike skill may all come to naught through the chances and hazards of the sea.

Excepting only his belief in the possibility of successful invasion without first destroying or neutralizing the opposing fleet, all the above quoted opinions of Sir William Monson are accepted as true to-day, and they have been abundantly confirmed by the practice of great English seamen during the past three hundred years.

*James the Sixth and the Gowrie Mystery.* By ANDREW LANG. (London, New York, and Bombay: Longmans, Green, and Co. 1902. Pp. xiv, 280.)

THOSE who are not interested in the minute study of the problems of individual character, or who do not care to master details which, however intricate, "throw strange new light on Scottish manners and morals," will probably content themselves with the more summary and less picturesque treatment accorded the theme in the second volume of the author's *History of Scotland*, to whose thorough preparation the Gowrie monograph bears witness.

The present work would not have been written had Mr. Lang not obtained many unpublished and hitherto unknown manuscript materials. By their use he becomes the first to solve conclusively certain parts of the enigma, while in other directions his critical power appears to lead him further toward ultimate truth than any of his predecessors have gone. Much remains mysterious and conjectural, but the balance of fact and probability inclines decisively toward the innocence of James and the guilt of the Ruthvens.

Of the existence of a Gowrie plot Mr. Lang leaves little or no doubt; its precise aim must remain a matter of conjecture. He himself believes that the affair was the "desperate adventure of two very young men," who conspired to lure the king from Falkland to Perth by the tale of the pot of gold, there to kidnap him, convey him to Gowrie's castle of Dirleton near North Berwick, thence to impregnable Fast-castle, the stronghold of Logan of Restalrig, and "see how the country would take it." Kidnapping the king had become almost a family habit with the Ruthvens; it would gratify ambition and revenge, and was generally regarded, perhaps, as a harmless constitutional procedure not deserving of death. If there was no attempt to kidnap, Mr. Lang thinks there was no plot.

The new material at Mr. Lang's command concerns both the Gowrie conspiracy proper and its sequel, the Sprot-Logan affair. Believing rightly that the "infamous conduct of the Scottish Privy Council in 1608-9 does not prove that, in 1600, the king carried out a conspiracy in itself impossible" and which required for its success the coöperation of Gowrie himself, Mr. Lang makes the complete separation of the two a structural feature of his work. The new sources on the Gowrie conspiracy were found in the London Record Office!

A letter of December 5, 1600, from Nicholson to Cecil introduces a new character, Robert Oliphant, Gowrie's trusted retainer. The evidence, if accepted, proves that Gowrie had formed the plot as early as February or March, 1600, when he was in Paris; that he there asked Oliphant to play the rôle of turret-man, but was evaded; that Henderson was the man in the turret, had been trained by Gowrie to the part, but "fainted." Mr. Lang considers that Oliphant, "though entirely overlooked by our historians, was probably at the centre of the situation." The reader must decide for himself.

The "Vindication of the Ruthvens," printed in Appendix B, is a document long desired by historians. This sole constructive attempt at a consistent defense "destroys itself by its conspicuous falsehoods," and shows how very poor a case was the best the contemporary author could produce. Its evidence is also damaging, because on points of great importance it clashes with modern apologists. In particular, it admits the presence of Henderson at Falkland, and it omits to make capital out of the presence of the Murrays in Perth, as proving a royal conspiracy. It ignores their very existence.

Apart from the new evidence, the validity of Mr. Lang's conclusions with respect to the affair of 1600 depends upon his demonstration of the credibility of the King's witnesses by disproving the assumption of wholesale perjury. His case is strong. Their trustworthiness is defended on the broad ground that men not too dainty to take part in a conspiracy would not be too dainty to refuse to swear to essential points in the government's case,—yet not one deposed to Henderson's presence in Falkland. Further, Robertson, the Perth notary, who swore in September that he saw Henderson emerging from the readiest staircase to the turret, did not repeat this testimony in November, which might imply that perjury "was rather repressed than encouraged." That James published Henderson's narrative with full recognition of its variances from his own is well known. Lennox's credibility is of peculiar importance, for if James told Lennox, before reaching Perth, of the pot of gold, the theory of an accidental brawl is entirely destroyed. Why should Lennox swear falsely to the tale of the gold and refuse to swear to Henderson's presence at Falkland?

Mr. Lang accepts the King's narrative, with the exception of the murder theory, on the ground that it gives the sole explanation not demonstrably impossible; that it "colligates" all the facts and is corrob-

orated by them, while no other hypothesis produces coherency. "It cannot be rejected merely because it is unlikely."

Former writers on the Sprot-Logan affair have always reasoned from the unknown to the probable. The Haddington manuscripts place Mr. Lang upon a different footing. These documents, inherited by the present earl from his ancestor, Sir Thomas Hamilton, king's advocate at Sprot's trial in 1608, contain genuine specimens of Sprot's handwriting, letters and papers of questionable authenticity attributed to Logan of Restalrig, and—most important of all—the suppressed records of Sprot's private examinations before the Privy Council between July 5 and August 11, 1608,—all heretofore unused.

Among the Hatfield manuscripts are genuine letters of Logan. A comparison of their photographs with photographs of the alleged Logan plot-letters in the Edinburgh Register House, supplemented by the knowledge of Sprot's genuine handwriting gained from the Haddington manuscripts, proves incontestably that all the famous plot-letters are in Sprot's handwriting and none of them in Logan's. This solves a mystery of three centuries' standing.

The Haddington manuscripts attest the iniquitous proceedings of the Scottish Privy Council in 1608-9. By Logan's forfeiture Dunbar and Balmerino, who were indebted to his estate for purchases of land to the amount of 33,000 marks, escaped payment. The manuscripts show that at Sprot's trial the "government were the real conspirators"; that all the plot-letters were then in their hands, though none were produced; that Sir William Hart's public and official statement of 1608 was wilfully dishonest; and that the government at Logan's posthumous trial in 1609, having iniquitously suppressed Sprot's confessions, robbed Logan's heirs by producing as proofs of his guilt letters that Sprot had acknowledged to be forgeries of his own. There is nothing to show that James ever knew the details of Sprot's confessions, which, by the way, were studiously concealed from Archbishop Spottiswoode, himself a member of the Privy Council. Sprot forged the letters after Logan's death as instruments for blackmailing his executors.

The only documentary evidence that directly connects Logan with the Gowrie conspiracy is "Letter No. IV.," from Logan to Gowrie, dated July 29, 1600. This letter alone (a fact not heretofore known) Sprot never confessed to be a forgery, but stated that it was the model from which he forged the rest. This is certainly true. The letter as we have it is unquestionably in Sprot's *handwriting*, but from internal evidence Mr. Lang concludes—reasonably, as it seems to us—that its *substance* is genuine. If so, which is a matter of individual opinion, not knowledge, there was a Gowrie plot, and Logan was a participant. Sprot's confessions seem to contain grains of truth, and the Sprot-Logan affair therefore affords a strong surmise of the existence of a Logan-Gowrie plot, but adds no absolute certainty to it.

The entire matter—conspiracy, sequel, and evidence—is exceedingly intricate, and is one upon which opinions may still differ. In our judgment, however, critics will incline to accept Mr. Lang's verdict.

OLIVER H. RICHARDSON.